



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2018

No. 202

Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN CORNYN, a Senator from the State of Texas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, strong to save, we put our trust in You. Continue to be our shelter in the time of storm. Guide our lawmakers. Keep ever before them the vision of a better world that is yet to be. May the words of their mouths and the meditations of their hearts be pleasing to You, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

Lord, give our Senators pure intentions, a steadfast regard for Your glory, and a faith that will not shrink, though pressed by many challenges.

We pray, in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 21, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN CORNYN, a Senator from the State of Texas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CORNYN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

(Thereupon, Mr. KENNEDY assumed the chair.)

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the events of the past week should concern every American. This may have been the most chaotic week of what is undoubtedly the most chaotic Presidency ever in the history of the United States.

The stock market is in a tumult and in decline. The Secretary of Defense, one of the only pairs of steady hands in our government, is resigning from the administration in protest. The United

States is pulling out of Syria and likely Afghanistan, abandoning our coalitions, allies, and the Kurds, and surrendering the field to Putin, Iran, Hezbollah, ISIS, the Taliban, and Bashar al-Assad.

The positions of Defense Secretary, of Attorney General, of Ambassador to the United Nations, of Interior Secretary, and even of Chief of Staff to the President are all in flux.

The institutions of our government lack steady and experienced leadership. With all of these departures, it is about to get even more unsteady. The President is making decisions without counsel, without preparation, and even without communication between relevant Departments and relevant Agencies. All of this turmoil is causing chaos in the markets, chaos abroad, and it is making the United States less prosperous and less secure. To top it all off, President Trump has thrown a temper tantrum and now has us careening toward a Trump shutdown over Christmas.

In a short time, the Senate will take part in a pointless exercise to demonstrate to our House colleagues and the President what everyone here already knows: There are not the votes in the Senate for an expensive, taxpayer-funded border wall.

President Trump, you will not get your wall. Abandon your shutdown strategy. You are not getting the wall today, next week, or on January 3 when Democrats take control of the House.

Just 2 days ago, the Senate came together to support a proposal by Leader MCCONNELL—unanimously, every Democrat, every Republican—to extend government funding through February without partisan demands. What it would accomplish would be that the government would not shut down, the fights we are having would be postponed to a later day, and millions of Americans would not be hurt this Christmas week.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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